

JUN 18 1963

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*Will the Senator Yield?*

STATINTL

Senator Thomas Dodd exercises a heavy responsibility when he appears to depart from principles widely associated with a political movement of which he is a very important leader. We have now the Dodd Resolution, in which Mr. Dodd, joined by a number of his colleagues, calls on the Senate to endorse a unilateral ban on testing nuclear weapons in the atmosphere or in the ocean, for as long as the Soviet Union refrains from any such tests. Meanwhile, says Dodd, we can fire away to our hearts' content above the atmosphere, and underground, without fear of adding to the radioactive content of the air we breathe. And if tomorrow the Soviet Union should begin to test in the atmosphere—and we have the precision instruments to know exactly when that happens—we can follow suit the day after tomorrow.

We most reluctantly disagree with the Senator, stressing our admiration for him and his record. The disagreement derives from our fundamental belief that nuclear weapons are, at this point in history, a blessing, not a curse. Without them, as Winston Churchill has pointed out, there would not today be a free man on the continent of Europe. Under the circumstances we must everywhere resist the coils of the Liberal demonology, which during the past decade have captured substantial numbers of the governing community, causing, for instance, Dwight Eisenhower, in the fall of 1958, to suspend unilaterally atom testing even while necessary research into the refinement of the atomic weapons system went undone.

Granted much of what we need to know about the atom we can discover by firing bombs under the surface of the earth. Unless we have been misled by the scientists and the military, some of what we need to know we cannot know except by occasional testing in the atmosphere. And as a theoretical problem, we do not now know what it is we will want to know a year from now, what possibilities have opened up, which can only be pursued by testing in the atmosphere. Will atomic power play a role, as has been widely suggested, in the development of a truly effective anti-missile missile? And how are we going to find out? What did we find out as the result of the last series of tests? Why did we need to conduct them? Because there was an accumulation of unanswered questions. Won't there be an accumulation of unanswered questions a year or two or three hence? Meanwhile, the enemy can be expected to work rigorously toward the accumulation of new techniques, observing the hiatus for so long as is convenient, and then blasting away again at his convenience, leaving it for us to struggle to keep even.

Senator Dodd has done more than almost any American to wage the good fight against the creeping superstitions of the disarmament fetishists. So clear has his vision been, and so steady his nerves, that he owes his followers a further elucidation. Can we have missed the point? Or might he have missed it?

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